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Forty-seventh session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 30 September 1992, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. HAYES (Vice-President)	(Ireland)
later:	Mr. GANEV (President)	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. NANDOE (Vice-President)	(Suriname)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Karzay (Afghanistan)
Mr. Diallo (Niger)
Mr. Al-Sahaf (Iraq)
Mr. Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)

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Address by Mr. Percival J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica

Statements made by

Mr. Nwachukwu (Nigeria)
Mr. Jameel (Maldives)
Mr. Booh-Booh (Cameroon)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences [8] (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. KARZAY (Afghanistan): I shall read out the following statement on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Afghanistan.

"Allow me to express my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am fully confident that the work of the Assembly will yield fruitful, indeed radiant, results under your wise guidance, and with the endeavours of the Secretary-General.

"It is a source of pleasure for the delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan to see the new Bulgaria, having renounced communism, taking its place in the international community with new principles and values in line with the true aspirations of the Bulgarian people.

"The wise and effective stewardship of your predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, will always be remembered by those who participated in the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We were glad to see a record of such high quality placed at the disposal of the General Assembly by a skilful diplomat who represented the brotherly country of Saudi Arabia.

"The universality of this Organization has been further strengthened this year by the admission of 13 new Members. We welcome them to this world family and assure them of our cooperation in the realization of the purposes of this Organization.

"It is the grace of Almighty Allah that gives me the great honour of conveying this message to the General Assembly for the first time since the establishment of an Islamic State in Afghanistan.

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"The forty-seventh session of the General Assembly is convened in conditions where the remnants of the cold war and a polarized world are melting, where colonial structures are falling apart and where a new and just order is being forged on our planet.

"The 14-year resistance of the heroic Afghan mujahideen, of the liberation movements of nations under tyranny, and of reform movements in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, coupled with the unjust and unrealistic nature of communism and totalitarianism, contributed to the collapse of those systems and consequently to smashing the myth of world-power polarization. This weakened the concept of military pacts and to some extent changed the political map of the world. The years of cold war came to an end and the hope of a new and fair world order emerged. Such positive developments - and their subsequent outcomes - have given shape to new horizons for the world order, and also to the role of the United Nations in world affairs.

"For my delegation, the forty-seventh sesssion of the General Assembly session has two significant features. First, the representatives of the Afghan nation are taking their seat once again in this Organization and, secondly, we are participating in this session with the expectation that the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as international financial institutions and Member States will continue to extend their assistance to the second phase of our struggle: the economic reconstruction and social rehabilitation of our country.

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"I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express, on behalf of the people and the Islamic State of Afghanistan, my profound appreciation to all those Member States that firmly stood by our side in condemning the aggression of the former Soviet Union and supported the righteous struggle of the Afghan people for the restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Afghanistan, and its non-aligned and Islamic character. Their dynamic political and generous humanitarian support has been a source of encouragement during the entire years of our struggle, in which we have never felt alone, believing that God Almighty and righteousness were on our side.

"In this respect, our special heartfelt thanks and gratitude is extended to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Republic of Egypt. We will always remember the strong political and generous humanitarian assistance of the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, Western European countries and Japan.

"We thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, his Special Representative and the Office of the Coordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA) for playing a conciliatory role for bringing peace to Afghanistan, as well as channelling assistance to our people.

"We would expect that this Organization may continue to assist Afghanistan in the realization of the noble aspirations of our people.

"Speaking for the first time after the establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, I deem it necessary to make a brief reference to a matter that concerns the circumstances that culminated in the collapse of

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the previous regime and the establishment of an Islamic State in the country.

"The understanding reached between the leaders and commanders of Jihad with the regular and irregular forces of the previous Government in the country contributed to a smooth and peaceful transition of power from that Government to the newly established Islamic Government of Afghanistan on 28 April 1992, avoiding, perhaps, a blood-bath in the capital.

"Based upon the high objective of avoiding further loss of life and bloodshed, the newly established Islamic State has tried to solve existing political problems, which are the legacy of the 14 years of war and destruction in the country, through peaceful means of dialogue, negotiations, tolerance and understanding, thus preparing the ground for holding free and fair elections as a viable procedure of guaranteeing democracy and social justice.

"It should be obvious that holding a general election in a country requires, first and foremeost, an atmosphere of complete peace and security. Unfortunately, the recent irresponsible non-stop three-week rocket attacks on Kabul resulted in the tragic loss of some 2,400 innocent people, as well as 9,000 injuries. These senseless attacks have also seriously disturbed the speedy and final resolution of the present political problems. This situation, as well as the ongoing programme of repatriation of refugees and that of the resettlement of displaced people, as well as the lack of adequate security and financial resources, and facilities that are essential requirements for holding a general election, brought the Government to the poirt of taking a preliminary

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step, which would prepare the ground for the holding of a free and fair election. This first step is the convening of a traditional Loya Kirgah" -

a Grand Council, a Council of Representatives: in other words, a Shura-i-Ahli-Hal-wa-Aqd, a term used for the same gathering, in Arabic - "comprising the representatives of the people of Afghanistan. This assembly is to be held at the earliest convenience, probably within the next two months.*

"During the past month, some assemblies have been convened in different parts of Afghanistan to deliberate on the present political situation in the country. On 8 September 1992, an assembly consisting of 2,500 Jihad commanders, heads of tribes, ulama" - religious scholars - "and influential Afghan personalities representing 16 of the 29 provinces of Afghanistan was held in the city of Ghazni, somewhere near Central Afghanistan. After discussing various issues pertaining to security conditions, the political situation and basic needs in the provinces, and especially in Kabul, the assembly made a request to the Government to call a Loya Jirgah, which would be the best and shortest path for resolving the present crisis. Their deliberations call for convening, by the end of October, a Shoura, that is, a Jirgah or a Council, of all segments of Afghan society, including Afghan refugees living abroad.

"On 12 September 1992, another assembly was convened, in the city of Kandahar. In this gathering, Jihad commanders and heads of several tribes of southern and southwestern Afghanistan called for the convening

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* Mr. Hayes (Ireland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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of a Loya Jirgah. It is noteworthy that the participants in this assembly, among other things, requested the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations jointly to supervise the convening of such a grand assembly.

"In addition to the above-mentioned assemblies, there have been a number of other gatherings throughout Afghanistan that have asked the Islamic State to convene a Loya Jirgah as the only authoritative platform to decide on the political future of the country.

"The position of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, which reflects the righteous demands and suggestions of the valiant people of Afghanistan, obligates it to ensure that all ways and means and are utilized in seeing that this wish of the nation, echoed through the convening of various assemblies, is heeded.

"The safeguarding of the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan could only be ensured if the will of the nation, which is the source of sovereignty, is expressed. Such aspirations, under prevailing conditions, could be reflected through the convening of a Loya Jirgah, which in the absence of the possibilities of holding elections is the only authoritative and inclusive body to determine the political destiny of the country.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan is exerting every effort to bring about appropriate safeguards and guarantees for facilitating the speedy transition of power to an elected government through Loya Jirgah. However, for the purpose of ensuring appropriate safeguards and guarantees, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, if necessary, may request the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to supervise the proceedings of such an assembly.

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"Our struggle has been victorious because of the 14 years of continuous, valiant and dedicated sacrifices made by our Muslim nation against a super-Power and its supporters. This victory is a brilliant milestone and turning-point in our history. But the price of victory has been very high.

"To portray the extent of death and destruction in Afghanistan, it is perhaps sufficient to quote the first paragraph of the 'Consolidated Appeal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan', which says: 'Few countries in history have suffered to the extent Afghanistan has over the past 14 years. Aside from the physical destruction, which was often nothing short of cataclysmic, the results of the war include over 1 million people killed, over 2 million disabled, nearly 6 million refugees in neighbouring countries and 2 million internally displaced persons'.

"The total destruction of most of the villages and towns has been estimated at 200,000 hectares of forest, 8,000 water arteries, 6 million cattle, 114 medical centres, 2,700 kilometres of main roads and more than 2,000 school buildings. Almost all our power stations and communications systems have been either totally destroyed or very badly damaged. The real estimate of losses is to be reckoned. There are about 10 million mines implanted by the Soviet occupying forces all over Afghanistan. Perhaps the coming Afghan generations may not be able to walk without fear on their own soil. And this is the saddest part of it.

"The completion of the repatriation programme is directly related to de-mining. According to United Nations reports, in recent months there have been many returnees who were killed or injured by the mines.

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Medical clinics in the border town of Peshawar in Pakistan are overcrowded with the mine-affected returnees. In this respect, we call upon the international community to respond positively to the appeal of the Secretary-General in supporting financially the related projects of the United Nations.

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"While the international community is celebrating the end of the Decade of Disabled Persons, there are 2 million people who fall into the same category in my country, and their destitute and meagre existence deserves special attention.

"Our problems are so great that we, with our limited capabilities, cannot address the critical needs of disabled persons. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, with its war-shattered economy as one element affecting its rehabilitation programmes, has prioritized the construction of new hospitals and clinics which need to be financed by international assistance programmes.

"The efforts of this Organization in adopting principles for the purpose of ensuring the implementation of measures and a monitoring system for the rights of disabled persons is commendable. However, the problem in my country is of a different nature. We have to create appropriate national machinery to support almost 2 million disabled persons, victims of armed conflict. Without appropriate international assistance, that objective cannot be achieved.

"As for the orphans of war, if we estimate that each Afghan killed in the 14 years of war had one child, there are 1.5 million orphans in Afghanistan. Because of that great number, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is in critical need of international assistance for the rehabilitation of orphans of war.

"In appreciation of the severity of the problems of orphans of war and armed conflicts and their deserving of particular international attention, my delegation proposes the establishment of a special fund in the framework of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the rehabilitation of orphans as a result of armed conflicts, wherever they

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are and to whatever country they belong. In this regard, it may also be appropriate to declare the year 1994 the international year of the orphan.

"There can be no political stability in any country without economic viability. The Islamic State of Afghanistan has inherited a country that is physically devastated, psychologically battered, economically depleted, and politically and socially tormented; the population is in dire need of moral and material support. The Islamic State was established as a result of immeasurable sacrifices and the great suffering that the Afghan nation has endured for the sake of its freedom and its conviction to its faith. Our people's struggle has had international significance in general and has had wide-ranging impact on the promotion of freedom and the emergence of new States. Without a sound economy, the peace that has been achieved at such a terrible cost cannot be guaranteed, and instability in Afghanistan is sure to affect the region.

"The war has destroyed the economic infrastructure of Afghanistan. Rebuilding the country's economic structure is crucial for the future existence of Afghanistan as a productive and self-supporting member of the world community. Comprehensive and methodical economic programmes, with the assistance of friendly countries and the United Nations, will ensure the reconstruction process, a solid foundation upon which future economic progress can be built.

"At the moment, however, the issue of emergency humanitarian relief efforts takes priority because of the obvious food shortages, lack of clean water and electricity and inadequate medical care, which are threatening the survival of the nation as a whole and the capital in

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particular. Unfortunately, the Islamic State of Afghanistan has not received adequate support from the international community in this regard.

"The United Nations Special Representative on Afghanistan recently expressed dismay at the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the international community in responding urgently to meet the $180 million target of assistance proposed by His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his appeal of 5 June 1992. So far, almost $40.5 million has been received in response to that appeal. The positive response of some countries is greatly appreciated by the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

"Aside from the human calamities, in the first week of September of this year a natural disaster hit Gulbahar and other neighbouring towns of Parwan Province of Afghanistan. That flood was of a severity unmatched for many decades. According to reliable reports, about 3,000 people were killed, and hundreds of houses were totally demolished. It is astonishing that international authorities have not addressed their attention to that large-scale calamity. We are requesting the international community to provide emergency humanitarian assistance for the flood victims and their families.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan wishes to solicit the support of United Nations Member States in ensuring due consideration of item 141 of the agenda of the current session of the United Nations General Assembly, entitled 'Emergency international assistance for the reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan'. It is our sincere and earnest hope that Member States will consider extending their full support to the two separate draft resolutions that are to be submitted by the delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan on agenda item 141.

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"The Islamic State of Afghanistan is of the opinion that, in spite of many positive changes in international relations, some of the main objectives of the United Nations, such as total disarmament - especially with respect to nuclear arms - settlement of conflicts through peaceful means, the observance of human rights and the establishment of a new and just international economic order, have not been fully realized. Perhaps it would be more in line with the aim of realizing the purposes of this Organization for the positive new climate of international understanding to be utilized for the purpose of strengthening the role of the United Nations in bolstering the socio-economic advancement of the developing countries, especially the least developed ones. The willingness of the developed countries to ensure greater cooperation with the needy countries could contribute positively to the realization of this objective.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan holds the conviction that the multidimensional problem of the environment already threatens the future of our world. At the recent summit of Heads of State or Government in Rio de Janeiro, this global problem was discussed extensively, and a credible document entitled Agenda 21 was adopted, providing a sound basis for solving global environmental issues.

"It is promising to see that dependence on ideology in the settlement of regional conflicts is vanishing and a tendency is emerging in favour of strengthening international cooperation for the settlement of existing conflicts.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan will work for international peace in full cooperation with the United Nations and stand by and respect the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and all

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accepted norms of this world body. In the arena of international relations, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, as one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, will continue to pursue an active non-aligned policy, free judgement on international issues, sincerely supporting the objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, strengthening friendly ties with all countries on the basis of parity and mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's affairs. The Islamic State of Afghanistan pledges sincere adherence to all international agreements, stands against every form of colonialism and all racial ideas, supports the elimination of nuclear weapons and will help in erasing international and regional tensions.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan welcomes the current negotiations between the concerned parties in the Middle East and hopes that they will result in the realization of the legitimate right of the people of Palestine to establish their own independent State. Without an immediate halt to Israeli settlement in the occupied territories, there can be no firm assurance that those negotiations will lead to permanent peace and stability in that region. Afghanistan, in conformity with the principle of the right to self-determination and in compliance with the resolution of the Islamic Conference of Istanbul, supports the rights of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and asks for an immediate halt to the massacre of the innocent population of that Republic. We denounce the heinous policy of 'ethnic cleansing', which, in spite of world-wide condemnation, is still taking place. Afghanistan, as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.76 of the resumed forty-sixth session of the

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United Nations General Assembly on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, advocates decisive action, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, aimed at ensuring the rights of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to self-defence and to the protection of their territorial integrity and sovereignty.

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"While supporting the right of all people to self-determination, the delegation from the Islamic State of Afghanistan believes that the question of Kashmir should be settled through negotiations and dialogue on the basis of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan, while desiring friendly relations with all countries, attributes special importance to its relations with the neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran, as well as with the fraternal country of Saudi Arabia.

"We have a sincere desire to maintain and strengthen our traditional friendship with the United States of America. Afghanistan seeks friendly relations with Japan and with Western European and other Far East countries.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan aspires to positive and friendly relations with the new Muslim Republics of Central Asia and wishes to strengthen its commercial, economic and cultural ties with those republics.

"The Islamic State of Afghanistan also wishes for friendly relations with non-aligned India and hopes that India will cooperate with the people of Afghanistan in the needed areas.

"Our country desires close and friendly relations with the People's Republic of China and hopes that technical cooperation and trade with that neighbour will be expanded.

"Afghanistan wishes for the improvement of friendly relations with the Russian Federation and expects that the Russian Federation will participate fully in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. The Russian Federation, as the inheritor of the former

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Soviet Union, has the responsibility to compensate for the destruction caused by armed aggression of the former Soviet Union against Afghanistan.

"It is also necessary to express our concern for the suffering families of more than 30,000 Afghans still missing after the years of the former Soviet Union's aggression in our country. This tragedy has seriously affected the sentiments of all Afghans, and they expect that the Commonwealth of Independent States will address this issue urgently and seriously. Believing that a sincere desire based upon goodwill and mutual trust between the parties concerned could positively contribute to resolving this important humanitarian issue, the Islamic State of Afghanistan will try to use bilateral channels as a first step towards resolving this issue, unless circumstances require otherwise.

"In closing, I deem it necessary to point out that the United Nations, which plays an increasingly important role in the settlement of regional conflicts and world problems, should increasingly focus its activities on overcoming global problems and difficulties. As a Member of the United Nations, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is prepared to extend its full cooperation to the Organization in overcoming the world's existing difficulties and will spare no effort in implementing the resolutions and decisions of the present session.

"May Allah - Glory Be Unto Him - bestow ever greater successes to all participants of this current session of the Assembly."

Mr. DIALLO (Niger) (interpretation from French): The delegation of Niger is pleased to add its voice to all those who have preceded us and express to Mr. Ganev our heartfelt congratulations on his election to the

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presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. This election is testimony to the high esteem and prestige enjoyed by his country, Bulgaria, on the international scene and its contribution to the achievement of the ideals of our Organization, and is an acknowledgement of his talents as a seasoned diplomat and man of experience.

We should like to include in these congratulations the other members of the Bureau and to assure them of the full and total cooperation of the delegation of Niger in accomplishing their task.

I should like to express to Mr. Ganev's predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, our great satisfaction and compliments on his excellent guidance of the work of the forty-sixth session.

We hail and welcome the countries that have just joined the great family of the United Nations, whose admission is in keeping with the universality of our Organization.

I should also like to express once again to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, the heartfelt congratulations of His Excellency Mr. Cheiffou Amadou, Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Republic of Niger, on his election, which is the crowning of a brilliant career. The Government of Niger also wishes to extend to him its encouragement and support for the dynamism he has already imparted to the Organization.

Niger rejoices at the end of East-West rivalries and at the climate of confidence that has thus been created. It is a decisive turning-point in the history of mankind, marked by profound and rapid political and social changes brought about by powerful currents towards freedom, justice, democracy and human rights. This positive development in international relations, and

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particularly the hopes and expectations to which it has given rise, makes it imperative for us to engage in the search for a new world balance that takes into consideration the aspirations and needs all of the components of international society. In this connection, the sessions of the General Assembly are for the international community opportunities to achieve further progress in the search for peace, justice and harmony among peoples, in keeping with the ideals and principles of the Charter.

Thanks to the climate of international détente, prospects of general and complete disarmament and the hope that that will release additional resources for development seem increasingly achievable. Niger notes with satisfaction the positive results already on record in this field and wishes to congratulate the Secretary-General on his efforts towards general and complete disarmament.

International peace and security require that all countries make greater efforts towards a reduction of all armed forces and all deadly weapons of destruction. In this regard, I should like to announce that Niger has just ratified the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The climate of international détente is felt also in the evolution of regional conflicts. The "Agenda for Peace", which is a compendium of extremely relevant recommendations and measures for the prevention of conflict, peace-keeping and peacemaking, is an invaluable contribution of the Secretary-General to current thinking on ways of safeguarding international peace.

Niger hopes for a speedy and equitable solution to the conflict in Western Sahara through the organization of a self-determination referendum.

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The Government of Niger expresses the hope that the recommendations of the meetings of Lomé, Bamako and Yamoussokro and the most recent summit in Dakar of the Economic Community of West African States be taken into account by all parties to the conflict in Liberia, with a view to the establishment of peace and national reconciliation.

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The situation in Somalia is tragic and repugnant. We witness daily the appalling suffering of an entire people, victim of the most tragic drought exacerbated by a fratricidal war that makes the provision of humanitarian assistance difficult. Niger joins the rest of the international community in urging the rival factions to cease their hostilities and accept the presence of United Nations observers and a United Nations peace-keeping force to ensure respect for the cease-fire agreement and to ensure the distribution of food aid.

Recent developments in South Africa give us hope. Niger believes that the international community must continue to encourage the South African regime to take further measures to accelerate the democratization process while at the same time maintaining the necessary pressure until a democratic, non-racial Government is formed. The Organization must make the Pretoria regime adopt urgent measures to put an end to the organized violence that is tearing apart the country's black community and that constitutes a serious obstacle to the resumption and proper conduct of negotiations in the framework of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa.

With respect to security, the Middle East remains the most sensitive region in the world. Niger believes that no just and lasting peace can be established in the Middle East unless Israel withdraws completely from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We encourage all efforts to that end, and we welcome the dialogue that has begun since the Madrid conference, as well as the current peace negotiations on a just and final settlement of the Middle East conflict.

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With respect to the Arabian-Persian Gulf, Niger strongly condemned the aggression against and occupation of Kuwait. Kuwait has been liberated, but the threat of war persists. Respect for Security Council resolutions and the delimitation of the boundaries between Iraq and Kuwait are indispensable if a lasting peace is to return to the region.

The tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is inadmissible in the twentieth century. Niger vigorously condemns the acts of barbarism committed by forces of Serbia and of Montenegro against the populations of Bosnia and Herzegovina in violation of the sovereignty, independence and integrity of that country. Niger fully supports Security Council resolutions 770 (1992) and 771 (1992), as well as the resolutions of other international bodies condemning the aggression and calling for cooperation by all States in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The quest for peace in the world is one of the Organization's loftiest objectives. But to be complete, world peace must be backed by action to eliminate poverty. At the 1990 Paris Conference of least developed countries, the world was not surprised to learn that the number of least developed countries had grown from 28 to 42, most of them African.

The ever-growing burden of debt and debt servicing continues to deprive developing countries of resources they need for their development. Reasons for the grave crisis in Africa include the constant drop in commodity prices, the rise in prices for manufactured goods, the lack of access to developed-country markets, and the decline in development assistance. The continuing deterioration in Africa's economic situation is condemning hundreds of millions of individuals to stagnation and permanent poverty.

(Mr. Diallo, Niger)

In 1986, the United Nations, which we invoke each year, adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. It was then the consensus view that the economic crisis in Africa was essentially structural. African countries had committed themselves to adopt structural-adjustment policies, and developed countries and financial institutions had committed themselves to provide assistance and financial flows.

Unfortunately, despite the policies and reforms undertaken by African countries and the recommendations made at all international conferences, the situation continues to deteriorate. Despite the social cost of the reforms and sacrifices of African countries, the results have been disappointing, because of a lack of follow-up measures.

But there is growing awareness of the need to tackle this extremely serious situation more resolutely. Measures to lighten the debt burden of the poorest countries should be viewed in that context. The same is true of the proposal made by the former Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on development financing, which was considered at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

We welcome the decision of the Japanese Government to organize a 1993 international conference on development in Africa with the participation of African Heads of State.

We wish finally to mention the move to reinvigorate international cooperation stemming largely from the revitalization and restructuring of United Nations activities in the economic and social fields. Those activities should be strictly based on the recommendations adopted by the most recent

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international conferences. These include: the Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly on international economic cooperation; the International Development Strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade; the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children; and the Programme of Action and other major decisions adopted at the Earth Summit - the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - at Rio de Janeiro.

The right to development presupposes the right to a healthy environment. The Earth Summit at Rio defined the links between environment and development. It defined the responsibilities of the North and of the South for the deterioration of our ecosystem. It also made it possible to adopt legal instruments designed to reconcile man and nature. I speak here of the Earth Charter and of the conventions on biodiversity and on climatic change.

As a Sahelian country, Niger must deal with the effects of repeated drought and increasing desertification. It is of particular interest to us that at this session the Assembly should define the modalities for the negotiation and adoption of an international convention on drought and desertification.

Turning to the social sphere, we encourage United Nations efforts to promote the struggle against acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (AIDS), illegal trafficking in narcotics, and drug abuse. Those scourges must remain at the centre of our concerns. That is true too of efforts at the integration of women into the development process and of measures to protect the disabled, children and other vulnerable groups.

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The international conference on human rights in 1993, the conference on population and development in 1994, the world summit on social development and the fourth world conference on women, both in 1995, will offer opportunities to review all these problems at the highest level.

Natural disasters and other calamities are on the increase, and we must continue to focus on them. Each time, the devastating consequences of these phenomena remind us of the urgent need to enhance the ability of the United Nations to act more effectively. We are pleased at the Organization's examination of these subjects and at the appointment of distinguished individuals to deal with these issues.

Today, developing countries are fully aware of their primary responsibility for development. The political renewal we have seen in many African countries, including my own, stems from that awareness. Indeed, as members know, Niger convened, from 29 July to 3 November 1991, a conference on national sovereignty at which we engaged in a stark assessment of 30 years of efforts and to identify courses of action, guidelines and decisions to be implemented over a transitional period of 15 months.

(Mr. Diallo, Niger)

Since then, the democratically elected transition organs have knuckled down to implementing the political, economic, social, and cultural measures adopted by the Conference. These mainly involve improving and rebalancing the economic and financial situation; undertaking institutional reforms in every field; establishing self-confidence; and consolidating national solidarity and unity. Such measures, the outcome of a national consensus, are based on the fundamental choice by the people of Niger of a democratic and republican course.

Following its National Conference, Niger embarked resolutely on the road towards a pluralistic democracy with respect for human rights and guarantees of the effective exercise of public freedoms. The process initiated 11 months ago is following its charted course, gaining strength and further entrenching itself every day. There are difficulties inherent in the nature of the undertaking, but there are also results that encourage us to persevere.

While perhaps modest, this experience of a young democracy has made it possible to assess the constraints imposed by such a social project, the risks of derailment it entails, the impatience that must be stifled, and the legitimate expectations that must be met in order to ensure that this lofty enterprise succeeds. The establishment of stable institutions designed to guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms, social justice and national unity through regular and transparent elections will be crowned, we are sure, with success by the establishment of a state of law and a true democracy.

I am pleased to announce that Niger is making progress in the electoral consultations for the adoption of a constitution and the holding of municipal, legislative and presidential elections. Thus, on the threshold of the year 1993, Niger will become democratic on a firm footing.

(Mr. Diallo, Niger)

We are aware, however, that no democratization policy can be considered as lasting if measures are not taken to foster conditions favourable to progress and the flourishing of humanity. That is why we turn with hope to the international community, and more specifically to the United Nations, to nurture a new spirit of solidarity and justice among nations. Niger cherishes the hope that the General Assembly at this session will contribute to the solution of the great challenges facing the international community.

Mr. AL-SAHAF (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to convey my sincere congratulations to Mr. Ganev on his election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am confident that he will devote his rich experience and diplomatic expertise to ensuring the success of this session.

I am also pleased to welcome the new States that have recently joined the membership of the United Nations.

The great hopes for the emergence of a world enjoying peace, stability, economic growth, justice, and equality for all remain in all our minds. But we cannot help wondering whether the international community is any closer today to realizing these hopes than it was in the past. The rapid developments and radical changes that have taken place in the world since 1989 still continue apace. These developments and changes have led the world situation to the threshold of a new era, whose features have not become clear yet. We can say, however, that our world today - despite the end of the ideological conflict that divided a large part of the world into two blocs, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact - continues to be unstable, and continues to be prey to racial conflicts and armed disputes in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

On the other hand, the economic crisis has intensified, bringing greater misery to the developing countries, which experience famines of unprecedented magnitude in modern history. All indications point to an exacerbation of the division of the world into North and South, a world without equality, justice, or equity between the rich and strong countries of the North and the poor and weak countries of the South. These signs also warn against the advent of a new era of big-Power hegemony not only over weaker States but also over all international organizations with a view to using them as instruments to implement their policies and serve their interests.

The challenges which face us, particularly in the developing countries, make it imperative for the United Nations to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter, with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, within the framework of a world order in which the United Nations, through the collective will of all its Member States, should play an effective and influential role in protecting the sovereignty and independence of the Member States and in achieving the economic and social development which constitutes the greatest and principal challenge to the developing countries.

However, actual reality shows that the United Nations, which continues to strive to attain these aspirations, faces many obstacles that impede its progress towards them. The most prominent hurdle is the attempt by one State or group of States to impose hegemony over the policies of the United Nations and its institutions. The most flagrant aspect of that hegemony is what has been taking place in the Security Council since the course of international changes acquired its new, accelerated pace. As a result of this hegemony, which is being spearheaded and intensified by the United States of America, resolutions and measures adopted by the Security Council have become conspicuous for their double standard and selectivity in applying the text of

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the United Nations Charter. In so doing, the Security Council has distanced itself from the letter and spirit of the principles enshrined in the Charter and from the provisions of international law and the principles of justice and fairness that are necessary if a balance is to be maintained between the obligations and the rights of Member States.

(Mr. Al-Sahaf, Iraq)

There is no doubt that this imbalance will lead inevitably to opportunistic dealings that may very well stem from the ability of the stronger to deal and not from the foundations established in the Charter for the relationship between the Council and Member States. Such a state of affairs would pose a grave threat to peace and security on both the regional and the international levels.

What Iraq has been subjected to over the past two years, and the practices it continues to face under the cover of so-called international legality, are the most telling examples of double standards selectivity, and of the failure to strike a balance between rights and obligations.

The will of the Security Council has become divorced from the Charter and its resolutions have been transformed into political practices aimed at destabilizing a State Member of the United Nations, undermining its security, starving its people and depriving its sick and ailing citizens of the medicine they need. All this is being done to serve declared political objectives that in no way relate to the letter or spirit of the United Nations Charter or to the rules of international law.

In the name of international legality and under its cover, Iraq has been made the victim of an all-out war that has destroyed its economic installations and the infrastructures of its civilian life in a manner that is unprecedented in modern history. The motive behind this overkill and arbitrary use of armed force against Iraq was to throw a whole people back into the pre-industrial age, as then United States Secretary of State Baker told the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, in the course of their Geneva meeting on 9 January 1991. The studies and reports of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations

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have highlighted the magnitude of the destruction inflicted upon Iraq as a result of that aggression and the subsequent huge losses sustained as a result of the blockade and the embargo. I do not need to go into the details of those reports, which contain the findings of people commissioned by the United Nations and which have been distributed as official United Nations documents.

Notwithstanding all the excesses and the untold iniquities perpetrated against Iraq, we have striven in all sincerity and earnestness to honour our commitments vis-à-vis the resolutions of the Security Council and to cooperate with United Nations organs in doing all that is required of Iraq in every field. Many acts of provocation have been committed by persons who have been planted in the mechanisms entrusted with the implementation of Security Council resolutions with the aim of obstructing Iraq's discharge of its commitments and thereby making Iraq appear to be rejecting the resolutions of the Security Council. The obvious aim has been the creation of a climate that would justify new military strikes against Iraq and block any consideration of lifting the unjust and iniquitous blockade imposed upon it.

However, we have been able to foil the efforts aimed at achieving that evil objective and all the attempts made with the aim of creating crises between the United Nations and Iraq have been contained. Iraq has demonstrated full cooperation with the United Nations in order to ensure the sound and balanced implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council.

While Iraq is earnestly striving to implement its commitments vis-à-vis Security Council resolutions, we have yet to see the Council take any step towards lifting the blockade or even loosening its economic shackles which it has imposed upon the people of Iraq and which have had very grave effects indeed on the daily lives of the Iraqi people at every level.

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It has become evident from the firm determination of the Security Council not to ease the comprehensive economic sanctions imposed upon Iraq that the Council does not follow the rule of balancing obligations and rights, but is rather acting in line with declarations of the officials of the countries that exercise hegemony over the Council that the economic blockade against Iraq will never be lifted until Iraq's political system is overthrown.

Here, we feel entitled to pose a question to the whole world from this rostrum, asking whether the Security Council, in dealing thus with a State Member of the United Nations, has acted on the basis of the provisions of the Charter, international law and the principles of justice and fairness, or whether the Council has succumbed to the will and diktat of the Powers that exercise hegemony over it with a view to serving those Powers' interests before all else.

The present relationship between the Security Council and Iraq does not fall within the framework of implementing the resolutions of the Council but rather within the framework of implementing the foreign policy objectives of a very limited number of States. If those States, which are led by dubious policies in the United States, were to be given a free hand, then the grave danger would spill over beyond Iraq and engulf other nations; it would spill over beyond the present and engulf the future. The campaigns of threats and intimidation under the cover of the Charter continue unabated in order to create the appropriate climate for continuing the economic blockade against Iraq and justifying new military strikes against it with the aim of destabilizing its political system and finishing off its vital economic installations and infrastructures which are still suffering from the impact of the first military strike.

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A flagrant example of the injustices to which Iraq is being subjected within the framework of this relationship can be seen in the practices of the sanctions Committee set up under Security Council resolution 661 (1991). This Committee too is subject to the rule of veto despite its camouflage as a committee conducting its work on the basis of consensus.

As I have informed the Secretary-General in official letters citing factual instances, a review of that Committee's work would show how the objection of one or two members of the Committee is sufficient to prevent any response to Iraq's basic needs - and even to make it ignore the special exemptions stated in the resolutions concerning civilian needs in such spheres as food, electricity, agriculture, water and sewage, medical and educational requirements, and clothing.

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Iraq has been allowed, in theory, to import food and medicine. But, for two years now, Iraqi assets have been frozen while Iraq has not been able to sell any oil or export any other commodity in order to pay for its basic humanitarian needs. On top of all this, we see attempts now being made to seize completely Iraqi frozen assets abroad through a draft resolution currently tabled before the Security Council. This draft resolution has no justification or legality whatsoever, not even in the light of the pretexts contained in the draft itself. Iraq has cooperated, in good faith and in earnest, with the United Nations Secretariat in order to reach an agreement on the export of quantities of Iraqi oil and the use of the revenues thereof to provide for basic civilian needs and cover United Nations costs. The reason an agreement is yet to be reached has been the refusal of certain countries in the Security Council to remove from any prospective agreement their humiliating political preconditions, which are not in any way related to the substance of the agreement desired.

Iraq is prepared to address this question according to the following formula: first, that Iraq be allowed to export crude oil and oil products to produce a net return of no less than $4 billion for a period of six months, which may be extended for a further period if by then the embargo of Iraqi oil exports has not been completely lifted.

Secondly, that the net returns of the exports be deposited in an escrow account set up by the United Nations, then to be used for the purchase of foodstuffs, medicines and other essential civilian needs, the importation of which will be subject to the special measures of the Committee established under Security Council resolution 661 (1990).

Thirdly, that the Security Council name certain countries from which goods may be purchased according to normal commercial practices.

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Iraq is prepared to grant 5 per cent of the net return of this operation to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as a contribution towards international relief work in Somalia, for the benefit of the Palestinian people through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other areas. This will be donated in keeping with Iraq's humanitarian principles and outlook.*

In April 1991 the United Nations began its humanitarian relief programme to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people with simple and limited means. Interference from parties hostile to Iraq began to surface in order to influence the course of the programme by using it as a pretext and a gateway through which to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq. It became clear that the programme dealt with the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people according to the political desires, intentions and schemes of the countries presenting the aid, a fact attested to by some officials in the programme.

Therefore, the humanitarian programme has not assumed, in actual application, the effectiveness that would have made it possible to achieve its desired humanitarian objectives. Iraq reiterates the necessity for the United Nations humanitarian programme to remain within the framework of purely humanitarian objectives, away from political considerations and from the tendency to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq. We are prepared to cooperate in the achievement of any purely humanitarian goal sought by the United Nations.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

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Calls and allegations are increasingly made about alleged violations of human rights in Iraq. The parties that waged a destructive war on Iraq in the name of international legality would like to forget that the suffering of the people of Iraq resulted from their own actions which constitute the most flagrant violation of human rights witnessed by humanity in all its history.

I ask here, before this international gathering: what words can describe an action in which one hundred twenty-five thousand tons of explosives were dropped on the people of Iraq, bringing death to thousands of its children, men and women of all ages, and raining destruction upon all its vital economic installations, its civilian, residential centres and its schools, hospitals, formula milk plants, kindergartens and houses of worship? Is this not a most flagrant violation of human rights and negation of all moral and human values and standards, in addition to being a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the covenants related to it?

The false accusations being levelled at Iraq are the stuff of lies, rumours and distortions. They go nowhere near the very minimum of any objective, impartial or reasoned approach.

The real motive behind this orchestrated vociferous campaign is to serve the very same political objectives that were behind the military aggression perpetrated against Iraq and that are still operative in the continued economic blockade against Iraq, the starving of its people, the trumped up pretexts of interference in its internal affairs and the undermining of its national unity. The so-called no-fly zone over southern Iraq has been imposed by a decision of the United States, Britain and France, this time nakedly, without any Security Council cover, thus underscoring the flagrant aggressive

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policy currently pursued in order to partition Iraq rather than defend its "civilians", as the Western imperialist countries claim while they maintain their embargo against Iraq after having killed thousands of its civilian population through an aerial onslaught with bombs whose explosive force equalled that of a number of atomic bombs of the type that removed Hiroshima from the face of the earth. It is these very countries that continue to impose an embargo even on toys for the children of Iraq.

No one can deny that the main cause of suffering among the people of Iraq was the military aggression that destroyed Iraq's economic infrastructure and brought to a halt its services. The suffering has also been caused, and further intensified, by the continued imposition of this iniquitous blockade, which has visited yet more economic hardship and human suffering on the people of Iraq, in addition to continued foreign interference in the internal affairs of the country, the creation of problems and fuelling of internal conflicts and obstruction of the efforts of the central Government to carry out their duties and discharge their responsibilities towards the maintenance of law and order and preserve security and stability.

The only way to put an end to this injustice and ensure some justice is to lift the embargo imposed upon Iraq and allow its people to rebuild what has been destroyed and resume their normal life. With its known potential, Iraq is a country that can do without donations given by this or that country as a cover for well-known intentions.

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Indeed, Iraq can participate effectively in providing humanitarian assistance to countries in other regions of the world where such assistance is needed, once it regains its economic health. It had been providing such assistance before the blockade. Instances of this are numerous indeed, in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and many of the representatives listening to this statement know quite well that this is a fact.

The circumstances which were used as a pretext for imposing the blockade against Iraq no longer exist. Therefore, lifting the blockade is an urgent necessity on the legal and humanitarian levels. As a matter of fact, this step ought to have been taken immediately after the disappearance of the circumstances to which I have just referred. Persistence in imposing the blockade constitutes a naked violation of the letter and spirit of the Security Council resolutions, contravenes all humanitarian principles and values, and must make it clear to the representatives here, as it has made clear to us, that the reasons behind it are and have been the inhuman intentions harboured against Iraq by well-known parties, now and in the past.

It is indeed, in the interest of the human rights of the people of Iraq, that neighbouring countries should abide by the terms of international agreements and undertakings and desist from sending infiltrators into our country to perpetrate acts of murder, robbery and plunder against persons and property of the civilian population, as well as against the State assets, just as they perpetrated their criminal acts against us in March and April 1991, as I believe everyone now knows.

The Security Council's silence with regard to the criminal acts and operations of military aggression perpetrated in Palestine, Lebanon and other

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occupied Arab territories by the pampered and American-veto-protected Zionist entity are the most damning proof that the practices of the Security Council are devoid of justice and international legality because of the total domination by the United States over the Council and its procedures.

The violations that the Zionist entity has committed over the years, and continues to commit with impunity, against the people of Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories - in breach of the principles enshrined in the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, as well as in resolutions of the United Nations - would take an entire volume to list if those Israeli practices were to be classified according to the breach of every article and paragraph dealing with human rights and the rights of nations.

In return for all these policies of aggression and expansionism, the annexation of lands, the displacement of populations, and the killing and repression of civilians under military occupation, the Zionist entity receives nothing less than ever increasing political, military and economic aid which enables it to persist with impunity in its policies of aggression against the Palestinian people and its denial of their most basic and inalienable right - the right to return to their homeland and to establish an independent State in Palestine under the leadership of their sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

On the other hand, the impotance of the Security Council vis-à-vis the armed conflicts that are currently raging in a number of regions, and its inability to address the attendant human tragedies as in the case of Somalia, whose plight is one of the most horrendous human calamities, are further proof

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of the double standards and politically motivated considerations that govern the conduct of the Security Council and the measures that it adopts in accordance with the wishes and dictates of the United States of America - the Power that dominates the Council.

I wish, in conclusion, to point out that the peoples of the world as a whole do look forward to the day when the United Nations will play a real and effective role in bringing about a world of security, stability and prosperity. However, that day will come only when the Organization applies the letter and spirit of its Charter and the principles of international law in dealing with the major issues of mankind. That day will come only when the United Nations refuses to bow to any pressure or blackmail and, thereby, avoids becoming hostage to the will of the big Powers and refuses to be sidetracked from the noble human objectives that it was established to achieve.

Unless such a state of affairs pertains clearly and decisively, as the States of the world that are jealous of their independence and freedom hope, the world will suffer disastrous consequences and the very foundations of the United Nations will be weakened as non-compliance with the United Nations Charter would put into question the very credibility of the Organization, and that might result in bringing upon it the same fate that overtook the old League of Nations, or some such undesirable fate.

Mr. AL-NUAIMI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to extend to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. We are confident that your vast experience in the area of international relations will enhance the role of the Organization and promote its goals.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

We wish to express our gratitude for, and our deep appreciation of the tireless efforts of your predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi, during his tenure as President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, which was characterized by many constructive achievements.

This session represents a historic turning-point in the enhancement of the universality of the United Nations. Hence, we believe that the admission of the new States Members will strengthen the role of the Organization, especially in the current international situation, and we reiterate our commitment to cooperation with all States in maintaining international peace and security.

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I take this occasion to reaffirm our confidence in and our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to contain existing problems and to find peaceful solutions thereto within the context of a strengthened role for the Organization in consolidating the basis of international peace and security.

As we approach the beginning of a new century, the United Nations passes through a very delicate phase that will have far-reaching effects on the nature and course of international relations. One of the most outstanding features of that phase is the disappearance of bipolarity and its attendant phenomena. This is a development that ushers in a new era whose principal characteristic is that most countries of the world, particularly the major Powers, now resort to the United Nations, thus strengthening the Organization and enhancing the effectiveness of the role envisioned for it by the Charter. Consequently, the Organization has become the appropriate forum for resolving regional conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

Over the past few years, the world has been witnessing the emergence of a new world order after which every nation has been aspiring. We in the United Arab Emirates welcome this development and consider that it is positive in its basis, substance and goals, as, in our view, it will promote cooperation towards the building of a better future of respect for the rights of nations and equality between States, freedom and independence for all peoples and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

My country, proceeding from its traditions, cultural values and history, firmly believes in the United Nations Charter. We also support the organs of the United Nations as well as the peaceful means prescribed in the Charter for

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the settlement of inter-State disputes, and reject violence as a means of settling such disputes.

In spite of the optimism created by the recent changes in the world and the constructive role played by the United Nations in creating an environment of peace, there is still a number of problems that endanger international peace and security and require a great deal of hard work. Moreover, the new spirit of détente that pervades world politics does not mean necessarily that we now live in a world of absolute harmony. The security of small nations is still threatened, in the still existing maelstrom of regional conflicts, by the dangers arising from the ambitions of those States that still seek hegemony and expansion at the expense of their neighbours. This, of course, contravenes the principles of the United Nations Charter, undermines the rule of international law and runs counter to the desire of the international community to live in peace and to resolve disputes by dialogue, peacefully. Consequently, we must take the appropriate collective measures that are capable of preventing those who wish to create situations that threaten international peace and security from perpetrating such actions. Such an undertaking on our part would be compatible with the new international realities especially now when we are on the verge of turning a new leaf and ushering in a new era of international relations based on peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. One of the most important lessons history has been teaching us since the Second World War is that aggression does not pay and that we must forswear the use of force to achieve political expansionist goals. It is indeed the responsibility of the United Nations to focus attention on this lesson and to translate it into concrete action through the

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exercise of a collective will that is capable of deterring aggression and warding off the grave dangers which threaten international peace and security.

Over the past few years, the Gulf region has witnessed grave events, from the Iran-Iraq war to the Iraqi aggression against the sisterly State of Kuwait. These events had deleterious effects on the region's security, economic, social and environmental conditions. Because of those events and the changes in the world situation which have arisen from the end of bipolarity and the emerging features of a new world order based on understanding, dialogue, the maintenance of security and stability, peaceful coexistence, and the peaceful settlement of regional disputes, we have been trying, together with our sister States, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, to translate those new concepts into rules and principles that would govern the relations and ties of the States of the region.

While we have been taking substantial strides along this peaceful constructive path towards restoring stability and security to our region, and, in the context of this effort, have been trying to initiate dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran to settle the outstanding issues between our two countries, especially the Iranian military occupation of the three Arab islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates, namely Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Mousa, the Iranian authorities have embarked upon the adoption of a number of unlawful measures with regard to the island of Abu Mousa in violation of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded in 1971.

My country has declared its rejection of these measures since they are in flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Arab Emirates. They also run counter to the principle of good-neighbourliness and contravene the letter and spirit of the Memorandum of

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Understanding, which, in effect, lacks equality and justice as it was imposed by coercion and the threat of force.

Iran's recent measures aim at controlling and annexing Abu Mousa island, thus following in the footsteps of the previous Iranian Government which, in 1971 militarily occupied the two islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, namely, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. Naturally, the recent Iranian measures will increase tension and threaten stability and security in the region. They contravene the principles of peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness and undermine the traditional relations between the two countries.

On 29 November 1971, Iranian armed forces attacked and occupied the islands of Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. This resulted in the killing of a number of civilians and the eviction of the rest by military force. On the next day, 30 November, Iran occupied Abu Mousa island.

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In response, the United Arab Emirates moved on every Arab and international level, and at every forum, including the Security Council, to resolve this issue and regain those three islands, which are an indivisible part of its territory. Throughout more than 20 years of Iranian occupation of those islands, the United Arab Emirates opted for quiet diplomacy and used every diplomatic channel in the firm belief that right is on its side and that the three islands will return to its sovereignty. This conviction has been strengthened by the current international climate and the desire of both the United Arab Emirates and the international community to resolve regional conflicts, with the aim of maintaining international peace and security by diplomatic means, in accordance with international law.

Proceeding from the desire of the United Arab Emirates to settle all outstanding issues and problems relating to the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the two islands of Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb and its violation of the 1971 Memorandum of Understanding relating to the island of Abu Mousa, and in the interests of stability and security in the region, meetings between the two countries were held recently in our capital, Abu Dhabi, with a view to reaching a peaceful negotiated settlement. However, the Iranian delegation refused to discuss ending the military occupation of the two islands of Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb and refused to have the case referred to the International Court of Justice. Consequently, the United Arab Emirates had no recourse but to put the issue before the international community. My statement today stems from our desire to find a peaceful settlement of this dispute based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

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International documents and historical/geographical facts, confirm that, from time immemorial, sovereignty over the three islands in question has been the United Arab Emirates'. Iran's military occupation of the islands has not changed their legal status. Under international law, occupation by the use of force does not bestow upon the occupying Power sovereignty over the territory it occupies, regardless of the length of that occupation.

Iran's occupation of the islands and the subsequent measures it has taken contravene the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and run counter to the principles of international law, particularly the principle of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, the non-use of force or the threat of force and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

My country has been and continues to be prepared to resolve this matter by peaceful means in accordance with Article 33 of the United Nations Charter, taking into consideration that sovereignty over the three islands of Abu Mousa and Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb belongs to the United Arab Emirates. In this context, we call upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to move towards the settlement of this problem by those means in accordance with the rules of international law and the fundamental principles that govern international relations.

The Gulf region still suffers from Iraq's aggression against the sister State of Kuwait. The international response to that aggression, as embodied in Security Council resolutions and the subsequent steps that culminated in the liberation of Kuwait, represent a positive application of the principles of the Charter and international law. It is also a clear indication of the

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international community's commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty of States, and to defend them.

In this respect, we reaffirm our insistence that it is incumbent upon Iraq to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions. Moreover, we urge the international community to exert more pressure on the Iraqi regime to secure the speedy release of Kuwaitis and other detainees and prisoners of war so as to put an end to this human tragedy which runs counter to the most fundamental principles of human rights and international law.

The end of the cold war and of the possibility of military confrontation between East and West has led to the settlement of certain intractable regional disputes. Moreover, it has become possible, under the prevailing conditions of international legality reflected in the unanimity of the Security Council, to move forward to resolving other chronic disputes.

Proceeding from this, we would have hoped to experience the effects of these positive trends in the new world order in our Arab area, and particularly in the endeavours to settle the Middle East conflict and the Palestinian problem, which is the core of that conflict. Our region has suffered greatly from the devastating negative effects of those two unsolved problems. It was against this backdrop that the United Arab Emirates welcomed the call to convene the Madrid Conference, supported the current Middle East peace negotiations and participated in the multilateral negotiations on the basis of the international legality embodied in United Nations resolutions, most notably Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

My country has called and continues to call for Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights and the Holy City of Al-Quds and for enabling the Palestinian people

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to exercise their right to self-determination. In conformity with the United Nations Charter, we express our opposition to the acquisition of territory by force. Moreover, we call upon Israel to desist from confiscating Palestinian and Arab lands and completely to halt its settlement activities and the deportation of Palestinians.

My country supports the unremitting efforts of the Government of sisterly Lebanon to extend its national authority to all of the territory of Lebanon within the framework of the Taif Agreement, which was accepted by all the parties concerned. In this context, we call for the full implementation of international legality, as embodied in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's withdrawal of its armed forces from all of Lebanon's territory. We also urge the international community to help the Lebanese Government in the reconstruction of Lebanon and the achievement of peace, stability and security in the country.

We follow with great pain and sadness the suffering of the fraternal Somali people. The fighting raging in Somalia has resulted in substantial loss of human life and property. We appeal to all the parties concerned and to all national forces in Somalia to put an end to the bloodshed and to set aside their differences. Dialogue should replace this internecine fighting, and all the parties concerned should give their full support to the international efforts aimed at bringing about a peaceful settlement of their disputes.

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Through its financial support and active participation in international relief efforts, the United Arab Emirates has tried to alleviate the suffering and distress of millions of our brethren in Somalia. We have also supported the Arab and international efforts aimed at reaching a settlement that would restore and safeguard the territorial integrity, stability and internal security of Somalia.

We commend the unremitting efforts of the international community as represented by the League of Arab States, the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity, and the United Nations to provide humanitarian assistance and support to Somalia and to facilitate the return of peace and stability to that country in implementation of all relevent Security Council resolutions.

The unspeakable tragedy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is cause for grave concern to us all. The entire world is shocked at the immeasurable loss of human lives and the brutality of the crimes that are being committed against the people of that beleaguered republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are being massacred daily because of their ethnic and religious identity. And this is in addition to the arbitrary destruction of historic and religious monuments.

We, like others, put the blame for this tragedy squarely on Serbia and Montenegro and their policy of "ethnic cleansing", aggression, expansion and violation of the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this respect we condemn the practices of the Serbian forces and the Yugoslav army and the criminal acts they continue to perpetrate against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call upon the

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Security Council to take all the necessary measures prescribed in the Charter in order to preserve the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to safeguard its security, political independence and territorial integrity.

The recent positive developments in South Africa, most notably the meeting of the leaders of the parties to the conflict, reinforce our belief in the importance of exerting additional international efforts in support of this peaceful process with the aim of reaching an agreement that would lead to the establishment of a democratic, non-racial society in which equality will prevail regardless of race, colour or creed.

The new world order, which seeks to rid the world of nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction, must be based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, prohibition of the use or threat of use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, and the right of every State to choose the course that best suits its development and the conservation of its natural resources. These are the principles that have guided the United Arab Emirates since its independence. Today, these principles assume greater significance because we are committed to the building of a world order anchored in justice and equality, without the threat of force. Recent events have proved that political goals cannot be achieved by military means. It follows, therefore, that the logical choice before us is to work towards achieving security for all through total nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of other weapons of mass destruction. We believe that such courageous steps, if taken, will promote international and regional security and strengthen the role of the United Nations in this regard.

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The end of the cold war and its bipolarity places a greater responsibility on the United Nations in dealing with world economic problems. This emphasizes the general consensus at the last session of the Economic and Social Council, which affirmed that the goals of peace, development and justice are complementary.

At present, the developing countries continue to face an unfavourable international economic climate that limits their development efforts. That climate has several manifestations the most prominent of which is the increasing deterioration of the conditions of many developing countries. Needless to say, this deterioration has a deleterious effect on the world economy as a whole.

The role of the United Nations in the area of promoting international cooperation for development is based upon the principles set forth in the Charter, which take into consideration the universality of the United Nations and the equality of all its Member States.

The new importance attached to development and environmental issues marks a significant step forward in international economic cooperation for development. The Rio de Janeiro Summit gave rise to a new concept of international cooperation based on international participation within the framework of the right of every State to utilize its natural resources in accordance with its developmental and environmental strategies.

There is no doubt that cooperation between the countries of the South themselves is indispensable for the resumption of the dialogue between North and South. By virtue of its promoting common interests, such dialogue, if resumed, will promote the process of social and economic development and thus contribute to the emergence of a more secure and stable world.

(Mr. Al-Nuaimi, United Arab Emirates)

This session marks the beginning of a phase of transition from a past mired in ideological conflicts, confrontation and rivalry to a future that may well usher in an era of understanding, cooperation and peaceful coexistence in a world of equality, development and justice for all.

In the words of the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization,

"We need a new spirit of commonality, commitment and intellectual creativity to transform a period of hope into an era of fulfilment." (A/47/1, para. 8)

This is more than an expression of faith. It is, indeed, our duty towards humanity and our future generations.

ADDRESS BY MR. PERCIVAL J. PATTERSON, PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Mr. Percival J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Jamaica, His Excellency the Honourable Percival J. Patterson, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. PATTERSON (Jamaica): On behalf of my Government and the people of Jamaica, I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I am confident that your vision and energy will guide this session to a successful conclusion.

I must also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has assumed the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations at a most challenging period for this Organization and a turning point in the history of world affairs.

We are all gathered here today to present our varying viewpoints about the many issues which are of concern to us as individual nations and as a world body. That in itself gives all of us a sense of hope that our problems, which loom so large on the world horizon, are not insoluble if we all determine to use this forum as a vehicle for working together to solve them.

In the past the admission of new Member States has been largely the result of the decolonization processes in Asia, the Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean. The current phenomenon of new States from Europe signals the fundamental realignment of political boundaries on that continent. I wish formally, on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, to welcome warmly the 13 new Members to the family of the United Nations.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

We meet in the aftermath of fundamental changes in the political landscape which have profound implications for each of us as individual nations. They also impact on the world community collectively and therefore on the agenda and future activities of this Organization. The end of the cold war heralds a new era in which the United Nations is expected to take decisive action based on the merits of each issue, rather than in response to fixed ideological positions buttressed by the use of veto power.

The world economy is experiencing revolutionary alteration. No country, developed or developing, is immune. In all of this, the fundamental and unchanging reality is the widening gap between the relatively few rich industrialized countries of the North and the many poor developing ones in the South.

In so many ways so much has changed, and yet so much remains the same. It was 12 years ago, in 1980, that as Foreign Minister of my country I last addressed the Assembly. It was a time of great optimism. There was ongoing dialogue between North and South. We seemed to share a common understanding of the requirements for international cooperation and development. Barely had the decade of the 1980s begun than the dialogue abruptly ended. The international economic environment became even more unfavourable. The developing countries of the South were left to grapple with enormous external debt. Most of us spent the decade undertaking major structural reform.

The painful adjustment has weighed heavily on the poor and the vulnerable. Only now are we beginning to see prospects for growth and development as a result of these reforms. It is important that a favourable international economic environment be established so as to complete the process. It is imperative that the United Nations, this universal

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

Organization, play a central role in enabling mankind to meet the challenges and grasp the present opportunities.

All Member States, be they large or small, have the right to articulate their views and express their aspirations. We have an equal obligation to contribute to finding a common solution. Today I address my remarks from the perspective of my own country, which exemplifies in many respects the goals and concerns of the developing world.

When Jamaica joined the United Nations in 1962 we recognized that to make a better life for our people we were required to consolidate our democracy, respect human rights, ensure the rule of law and promote racial, religious, and cultural tolerance. Ours is a society which reflects a varied mosaic - "Out of many, one people" is our motto. Ideally, this mirrors the central purpose of the United Nations - "Out of many nations, one world".

To achieve sustainable development and fulfil the promise of a better life for our people, we must create the conditions for economic growth and development for all our countries. To achieve this, we must reduce the vulnerability of developing countries to external shocks. I call upon the General Assembly to issue a summons to all Member States for a new agenda which provides the basic conditions for human survival everywhere.

Over the past 45 years the peacemaking function of this Organization has been circumscribed by the dictates of the cold war. The threat of a nuclear holocaust was averted not so much by reason but by the certainty of mutually assured destruction. The United Nations was relegated to the role of spectator, fearful of the consequences, but powerless to act. Peace and security in many regions was breached. This often reflected the surrogate conflicts between the super-Powers, exploiting the reality of economic disparities and nationalist or ethnic animosities.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

The United Nations can no longer remain impotent to prevent conflict, to make peace, to build peace and to keep the peace. The Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" contains many innovative proposals in these areas. They provide a constructive basis on which Member States may formulate effective responses to conflicts, actual or potential, around the world. Jamaica will contribute to the search for a full consensus on the effective role for the United Nations and its organs in the new scenario. The interface between the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice can best provide the requisite framework for legitimacy, authority and the operational context of international law.

We note the hopeful signs that are emerging in South Africa, the Middle East, Cambodia and the Korean peninsula. The current round of direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours is an encouraging devlopment which Jamaica fully supports. But there is still a long way to go in achieving the goals of peace and security. The world community cannot afford to relax either its vigilance or its commitment to a just and lasting resolution of these problems.

We began 1992 with hope that the progress towards ending apartheid in South Africa would gain momentum. The referendum in March formally sanctioned the reform process. Hope has turned to despair as violence has continued to pose a serious threat to that process. The blood of South Africans continues to be shed in the long struggle to end the abhorrent system of apartheid. The incidents that have taken place since July in Boipatong and the Ciskei homeland have nearly torpedoed the prospects for peace and the process of negotiating towards democratic rule in South Africa.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

The Government and people of Jamaica have long supported the anti-apartheid struggle in that country. We were heartened by the appearance of progress. We would not wish to see the process derailed.

The international community must signal its clear and unswerving determination to see concrete results that end the cycle of violence and ensure the success of negotiations aimed at achieving a democratic and non-racist society. Jamaica will not be satisfied until there is the reality of one-person, one-vote.

There are other areas in urgent need of effective United Nations initiatives. In Central and Eastern Europe, in the Persian Gulf, in South Africa, in Somalia, in Haiti, the problem varies in magnitude and in complexity. There is a real chance that the United Nations can make a significant contribution. It cannot do so without the resources and full support of the rich and powerful nations.

In my own region, in the Caribbean country of Haiti, a repressive and illegal regime continues to hold power a year after overthrowing the democratically elected leader of that country. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide remains a virtual exile. Measures taken by the Organization of American States (OAS) to resolve the situation have not yet achieved the hoped for results. In particular, the embargo is being flouted by some European countries and even by some member countries of the OAS itself.

We owe it to the people of Haiti and to ourselves to continue support for their cause for a restoration of constitutional rule. All those who espouse freedom must remain resolute in the conviction that the democratic flame which flickered briefly should remain for ever alight in that country.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

The machinery of the United Nations, in concert with the OAS, must render positive assistance to the Haitian people. We urge the General Assembly to lend its weight in support of the legitimate Government and people of one of its Member States.

The Secretary-General has correctly highlighted the importance of the concept of the rule of law in international, no less than in national, affairs. The International Court of Justice should be strengthened and its jurisdiction must be extended to command universal acceptance. Its judgements must have binding force and effect.

We would also urge the major industrial countries to give concrete expression to their commitment to international law by ratifying the Convention on the Law of the Sea without delay. The informal consultations initiated by the previous Secretary- General, and still continuing, have resulted in significant progress. The work must now revert to the Preparatory Commission, which has the competence and authority to make the necessary decisions.

Let us now review the world economic scene and the new agenda on which the Organization must immediately embark.

The link between peace, security and economic well-being is recognized by our Charter. It mandates the United Nations to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples through international action.

The break-up of the integated trading system of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, coupled with the rapid movement to dismantle their centralized economic system and substitute one that is market-oriented, has undoubtedly, in its immediate aftermath, posed severe challenges to the peoples of those countries.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

The Governments of the Western industrialized countries were quick to recognize the threat to peace and security, if these unstable and chaotic conditions were not effectively and immediately addressed. They have moved with commendable speed to identify and provide the assistance required.

Regrettably, the same urgency and attention has never been forthcoming in respect of what has been a problem of longer standing, that is far more fundamental and potentially catastrophic. I speak of the ever-widening gap between the affluent countries of the North and the poverty rampant in most countries of the South.

The decade of the 1980s brought sustained economic growth and increasing affluence to the industrialized countries and rapid development to the newly industrialized countries of South-East Asia. For the rest of the developing world - in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa and in the rest of Asia - this has, with few exceptions, been a period of relative, and often actual, decline in economic growth and living standards, exacerbated by rapid population increases.

The last decade witnessed a severe fall in commodity prices, the reduction of private- and public-sector flows, and a mounting debt burden which have resulted in outflows to the international financial institutions and to the developed world. Those trends must be halted and reversed.

In the search for lasting peace we must prevent increasing poverty for a substantial portion of the human race. The affluent also have a vital interest in the reduction of human misery. This is no time for recrimination as to who created this fundamental problem. We must all be part of finding an urgent solution to avoid political instability and social unrest.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

Most of our countries have embarked with determination on the difficult task of economic restructuring. We have been reducing government budgets, opening our economies, emphasizing the pre-eminent role of the private sector and creating conditions for competitive market-driven economies. Undoubtedly, these are necessary prescriptions.

There is, however, no denying that in the short run, they have imposed considerable hardships on all sectors of our population, particularly the poorest - our women and our children. In this critical situation, a supportive international economic environment is an urgent necessity to mitigate the short-term effects.

There is need for a greatly increased flow of public and private financial resources into the countries of the South. We must devise machinery to facilitate the transfer of relevant technology. We must create a climate of international trade which rejects protectionism and stimulates export-led growth.

Of increasing importance in the world economy is the trend towards regional economic integration movements and the consolidation of trading blocs among the countries of Europe and North America.

For the developing countries, the trend towards regional integration of economic structures is an essential step in the process of our own development. To the extent that this expands our home market base and promotes the cooperative sharing of financial and technical resources, it will strengthen our economies, increase our purchasing and productive power and contribute positively to the growth of world trade. From this exercise we will all benefit.

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

The developed countries already control the major share of world trade, financial resources and technology. If the trading blocs of Europe and North America create defensive mechanisms against each other and establish barriers impenetrable by the rest of the world economy, the result is likely to be a growing marginalization of the developing countries and a concomitant widening of the gap between North and South.

Such a process will lead to stagnation and an eventual shrinkage of world trade. An increasing world population alongside the prospect of more impoverished countries is a recipe for explosion.

A fair trading system is required to encourage the development of regional integration processes among developing countries to recognize their need for temporary preferential and protective measures in specific areas and promote the maximum openness in the economies of the developed countries. This path is essential to a more equitable, prosperous and peaceful world.

The iron curtain between East and West has finally been dismantled. It is now high time to bridge the gulf that perpetuates the great divide between the North and the South. This Organization - the United Nations - must provide the forum for meaningful dialogue and chart the course for practical, effective action.

The abatement of cold war tensions, the outbreak of ethnic conflicts, the reality of global interdependence, dictate that the world community must seize this opportune moment to give concentrated focus on a secure peace that rests on the foundations of meaningful development and sustained economic growth for all.

We must approach this dialogue in sober recognition of the fact that no part of the world can long remain immune to events in any other part. Famine,

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

disease, ecological degradation, the desperate migration of people in search of survival, the inhumanity of poverty, cannot indefinitely be ignored by any creature on planet Earth.

Meaningful development must have a social dimension and must be sustainable. In respect of the former, we welcome the proposal for the convening of a world summit on the theme of social development.

The Earth Summit, recently concluded in Brazil, served to underscore the interlinkages between security, disarmament, debt, trade, technology, the environment and development. Heads of State and Government were obliged to accept the interrelationships of these perennial concerns. We were forced to admit that these issues could not be treated in splendid isolation, but required concerted action. This very admission suggests that the time is propitious for a new beginning.

The spirit of Rio must not be lost. Time will tell whether the political will exists for us to cooperate with each other against the common threat to the environment we all share. Mere lip service will not suffice.

I expect this session of the General Assembly to settle the institutional machinery that ensures decisive action in the period following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It will need to address the concerns of small island States and the enhancement of scientific and technological capacity among developing countries.

Jamaica supports the decision to form a high-level commission for sustainable development. We intend to assist the commission fully once the important details of its programme of work have been agreed.

I expect the Assembly also to confront the question of financial resources in order to implement Agenda 21. An initial commitment of at least

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

$600 billion annually is required so that the work we have painstakingly accepted can be adequately implemented.

The key donor countries and agencies will need to look at several proposals within the Global Environmental Facility, the International Development Association, regional development banks, private-sector funding and financial transfers from Governments, to see how best a realistic international economic effort can be organized. But we must all resist the tendency to use resources for environmental protection and management as but one more device to bring developing countries under the dictates of the multilateral financial institutions.

The development that we seek in the present and the coming century is impossible without managing our environment efficiently. The case for acting in concert is overwhelming. The time for action is now.

Our agenda of political, economic and environmental changes, which all our citizens demand, no longer permits the United Nations to remain a passive spectator. It must play a catalytic role and assume operational leadership.

This makes it imperative that we re-order our priorities. This can be accomplished only in the context of institutional restructuring. The Secretary-General has already demonstrated his own commitment to this process. His proposals have been supplemented by proposals from many other sources. All of this provides a framework and a point of departure for our discussions and decisions in the months ahead, here in the General Assembly and in other organs of the United Nations.

The debate must be informed by the principles enshrined in the Charter. The decisions we make must ensure that the vision is realized and our purposes are met. This Organization must always act in a transparent manner so that it

(Mr. Patterson, Jamaica)

is never subverted by the introduction of hegemonism from any quarter. Any new world order must be based on the rule of law. In creating or shaping it, we need to be inclusive, not exclusive. All nations and peoples must be encouraged to satisfy their legitimate aspirations and fulfil their dreams.

While the new spirit of cooperation in the Security Council is a most welcome development, that body must reflect all interests in its determinations. Maintaining the confidence of the General Assembly requires its acceptance of accountability to this body. The role and function of the General Assembly must be enhanced. There must be non-selectivity in the taking of decisions and the consequent action to enforce them.

Definitions of human rights are not susceptible to differing interpretations imposed by any one State or group of States. The relevant international covenants on economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights must be universal standards. Once this is accepted we can deal effectively and even-handedly with all violations of human rights wherever they may occur. Resolute international action, based on the Charter and other rules of international law, must be applied.

Once more, this Organization is presented with a real opportunity to fulfil its noble purposes and to be an effective instrument in creating a world order of lasting peace, economic prosperity and social justice. Its success depends on the commitment and practical support that we, the sovereign nations that constitute its membership, bring to those purposes.

There is a clarion call proclaiming that a new dawn is at hand. If we succeed, the fruits are glorious.

The fact is, everything is at stake; we are all at risk, and so we dare not fail.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Jamaica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Percival J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. NWACHUKWU (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Your election is testimony to your sterling qualities as a statesman and a diplomat.

I wish also to pay tribute to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the outstanding manner in which he steered the affairs of the General Assembly during its forty-sixth session.

I wish to express on behalf of President Babangida, the Government and the people of Nigeria our appreciation to the many delegations which sent us messages of condolence following the loss of lives resulting from the tragic plane crash near Lagos.

I should also like to take this opportunity to commend Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the admirable manner in which he has been performing his duties as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I am confident that Mr. Boutros-Ghali, an accomplished diplomat, a distinguished statesman and a scholar of repute, will remain true to the worthy ideals of our Organization and bring his versatile experience to bear on the crucial issues confronting the international community.

Nigeria welcomes the new Members of our Organization. Their participation will enrich our discussions and strengthen international legitimacy and the rule of law.

I should also like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that in January 1993 Nigeria will complete its transition to democracy with the handing over of power to an elected Government. As you are aware, elected governments at the local and state levels are already in place. Elections to

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

the Senate and the House of Representatives have also been concluded. Our untiring efforts to evolving a democratic arrangement suited to our environment reflect our commitment to pluralism and dialogue.

In no other period in this century has there been greater hope for global peace and security than now. The end of the cold war, the noteworthy efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and the ever-widening circle of democracy all promise to create an international environment that is more conducive to the attainment of international peace and security.

However, many problems still threaten our quest for global peace, cooperation and development. In some parts of the world, political conflicts have degenerated into violence. We are also witnessing the resurgence of long-dormant ethnic and boundary disputes in Europe. Indeed, no region of the world today is spared the scourge of war. These wars have drained states and the international community of resources that could have been used for development.*

Africa, in particular, has experienced severe and persistent strife, especially in Sudan, Western Sahara, Somalia, Liberia and Rwanda. These conflicts have caused untold hardship, economic dislocation and a massive refugee burden. In addition, the conflicts have worsened Africa's weak economic condition and made more distant our hope for growth and development.

In accordance with its obligations under the Charters of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, Africa has continued to make efforts to settle these conflicts. Nigeria, for instance, hosted a peace conference on Sudan in May 1992 and also undertook a mission to Somalia to urge the

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* Mr. Nandoe (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

various factions to resolve their differences peacefully. In Liberia, we continue to work through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in search of peace. We remain, as ever, committed to the restoration of lasting peace in that country. The ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is an admirable example of regional arrangements recommended under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. It should not be allowed to fail. We appeal to all the parties in Liberia to cooperate with ECOWAS in implementing the agreements reached so far. The international community, particularly the United Nations, should complement our regional peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts through greater involvement and increased humanitarian assistance.

The situation in Western Sahara continues to be a source of great concern. We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to revive the stalled peace process. Nigeria believes strongly that the joint peace plan of the United Nations and the Organization for African Unity provides the best framework for ensuring peace while safeguarding the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

In response to pressures from the international community, change is indeed taking place in South Africa, and we welcome it. However, the difficulties in maintaining the momentum of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks give serious cause for concern. We urge the South African Government to intensify efforts to ensure an environment conducive to completing the transition to a non-racial democratic South Africa. The threat to CODESA by anti-democratic forces must not be allowed to succeed.

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But more importantly, and as a measure of its commitment to democratic rule, the South African Government should agree to the immediate establishment of an interim government of national unity that will supervise the transition to a democratic order. The role of the United Nations remains crucial in this process. That is why we welcome the dispatch of United Nations obervers to South Africa. We call on the Organization to increase the number of observers to enable them to oversee the transition more effectively.

The Nigerian Government applauds the recent efforts to advance the peace process in the Middle East. The present international climate is conducive to negotiation and compromise. We urge all parties to the Middle East conflict to take advantage of this momentous period in history to find a just and lasting solution to all aspects of the conflict. Such a lasting peace can be built only on a foundation that assures justice for all and the peaceful coexistence of all States in the Middle East, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

For the past few months the people of what was formerly Yugoslavia have not known peace. The parties to the conflict should heed the appeal of the international community by respecting cease-fire agreements and by resolving their differences through negotiations. They owe their people and us all the sacred duty of achieving peace.

There cannot be security in our world so long as nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction exist. As the United Nations begins discussion on extending the non-proliferation Treaty, all nations should place at the fore of that debate the objective of achieving a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. The chemical weapons Convention, which was recently concluded, represents a

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

significant milestone in the history of disarmament. Nigeria will sign the Convention and urges all States to do the same.

As the Assembly is aware, Member States spend over $1 trillion annually on armaments. This huge expenditure is no longer necessary as States move to an era of cooperation and peace. Expenditure on armaments should be sharply reduced in order to divert resources from this sector to development programmes world wide.

The economies of African States continue to be depressed by the debt burden, unfavourable commodity prices, net outflow of resources and protectionist trade policies. There is need for new funds to be injected into Africa to reverse the continent's economic decline. We acknowledge that our economic recovery and development depends primarily on the policies pursued by African Governments. However, the success of such policies rests in part on the fairness of the international economic system and the transfer to African States of adequate resources to enhance our growth-oriented policies.

The Rio Summit in our view was a success. The effective implementation of Agenda 21 programmes depends on the provision of financial resources to match the commitments. While we appreciate the support of the international community on the questions of desertification and drought, which are causing extensive environmental degradation in Africa, we appeal to all Member States fully to support the setting up of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare an international convention on desertification. We also expect that the composition of a commission on sustainable development will be finalized at this session of the General Assembly.

At its summit meeting in January this year, the Security Council reoriented itself to pursue the objective of preventive diplomacy, of

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

peacemaking and peace-keeping within the ambit of its responsibility. The Secretary-General has now produced a report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" with far-reaching implications for our Organization. My delegation notes with appreciation the recommendations contained in that report, especially with respect to the role of regional and subregional arrangements in promoting international peace.

Almost half a century ago the United Nations had 51 Members. The Membership has now grown to 179. The Security Council, which is vested with the primary responsibility of dealing with issues of international peace and security, has maintained its permanent membership of five. In his address to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, the President of Nigeria, then in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, said:

"The limitation of the permanent membership to the present five has become both anachronistic and unrepresentative."(A/46/PV.22, p. 54-55)

The composition of the permanent membership of the Security Council represents three out of five regions. Seen in the North-South context, four of its members come from the North. In addition, new demands on the issue have emerged with the recent changes in the international system. The parameters of democracy as well as size and role within the global system have become relevant criteria for adjudging the issue of representation.

The need to increase the number of permanent seats in the Security Council is in our view an idea whose time has come. Therefore, it should be a matter of principle for the international community that Africa must not continue to be a region without representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council. Nigeria, the most populous African nation, with the largest econonomic potential and its proven commitment to the cause of world

(Mr. Nwachukwu, Nigeria)

peace and security, possesses the qualifications to fulfil Africa's aspirations in this regard.

Let me seize this opportunity to place on record our appreciation for the courage of the Secretary-General in drawing the attention of the international community to the situation in Somalia. Since then events have shown that that courage was not misplaced. In the same vein, we expect that the Secretary-Gneral will ensure that Africans are adequately represented in the upper echelons of the United Nations Secretariat.

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization, let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals enshrined in the Charter. The gains manifested in the politcal and security fields in recent times must be matched by corresponding gains in the economic and social fields. For this to materialize, we must strengthen international cooperation in tackling the economic and social challenges facing our world. My delegation looks forward to the crystallization of such cooperation. We must therefore resolve to eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease; promote and protect human rights in all their facets; prevent the degradation of the environment; eliminate war as an instrument of State policy; and, above all, promote a virile, efficient and democratic United Nations.

Mr. JAMEEL (Maldives): It is my great honour and pleasure to congratulate Mr. Ganev of Bulgaria on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. His election to this important office coincides with a critical juncture in the history of the United Nations when the world is taking a turn towards a new era in international relations, and I wish him success.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend my delegation's deep appreciation to his predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, who demonstrated outstanding skills of diplomacy and dedication during his term of office.

It is also my pleasure to pay tribute to the Secretary-General Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the leadership and vision he has brought to the Organization at a time of crucial change.

Since we met last year, 13 new Member States have taken their seats in our midst. I should like to extend a warm welcome to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. I am confident that our Organization, which has always striven for universality, will greatly benefit from their participation in the work of the United Nations.

We face a time of challenge and opportunity. The impasse that characterized international affairs for more than four decades through super-Power confrontation has ended, giving way to a new era of international cooperation. We dare to hope that the noble aspirations envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations may be within reach. Yet the way ahead is not without obstacles. New conflicts motivated by ultra-nationalism, ethnicism and even religious intolerance confront us daily.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

In these turbulent times the United Nations must play an active and constructive role in soothing the fears and anxieties of its Member States. In order to do so, the United Nations will need the full support and cooperation of all Members at the highest level, both large and small. The United Nations must be provided with the requisite support and resources needed to address the vital tasks that lie ahead. Never has the need for a strong and vibrant United Nations been greater, when we are on the threshold of a new century, a new awakening.

We believe that the concepts put forward by the Secretary-General in his report, "An Agenda for Peace", deserve serious consideration. The need for both peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts with greater emphasis on the use of preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building measures has never been more urgent. None of these indeed is a mutually exclusive concept, but they are closely interrelated and need to be implemented in a comprehensive manner. Too often, a conflict is allowed to rage on for too long, before the international community is convinced to act firmly, and too often this may be too late.

Maldives is aware of the increasing financial pressure placed on the Organization as it is called upon to play an ever greater role in both conflict prevention and conflict resolution. It is imperative that the membership of the United Nations be committed to supporting these activities not by mere rhetoric but in substance. However, it may be fair to say that the smaller and the economically weaker members of this community will not be able to share on an equal level the burdens of the rapidly expanding peace-keeping and peacemaking activities of the Organization.

Unchecked escalation of conflicts anywhere in the world affects all of us

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

in varying degrees owing to the integrated nature of the global political economy. Yet we do not possess equal resources to address these problems. Perhaps it may be appropriate to consider directing a portion of the so-called peace dividend hoped for in the post-cold-war period towards United Nations peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts. That would ease the financial pressure being acutely felt by member nations, frequently unwitting victims of others' wars.

During the past year we have witnessed a number of dramatic developments in the international arena, which inspire both hope and despair.

The situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine still remain to be solved. We are encouraged by the ongoing peace talks and commend all parties involved in the peace effort for their courage and fortitude in coming to the negotiating table. We feel that no permanent peace in the Middle East can ever be attained unless the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are protected, the Arab lands occupied during the 1967 war are returned and the right of all States in the region to live in peace is guaranteed. In this respect we firmly believe that the guiding principles in any negotiated settlement should be United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

My delegation supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to facilitate the establishment of a national government in Cambodia by the middle of next year. The participation of all concerned is vital, and we encourage all parties fully to cooperate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the peace settlement.

The progress that has been made in South Africa gives us reason for hope. However, we are disturbed by the repeated incidences of violence that

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

have hindered the process of negotiations and disrupted efforts for dismantling apartheid and for the constitutional reforms that will ensure the rights of the black majority. We were heartened by the resumption of talks between the Government of South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC). We hope that the momentum will not be halted by a further outbreak of violence yet again.

Despite the liberation of Kuwait at the end of the Gulf War, the international community and the people of Kuwait continue to be haunted by the tragic consequences of the invasion and the brutal occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. Maldives believes in the inviolability of international borders between countries and in this respect fully supports Security Council resolution 773 (1992), which addresses the root causes of the conflict. We are deeply concerned about the fate of all Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners still being held in Iraq and hope for their early release and return to their homes and families. We consider this to be an issue of an urgent humanitarian nature.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

In my address to the Assembly last year, I cautioned that we should not allow our post-cold-war euphoria to blind us to the possibility of new threats which may endanger international peace and security, such as nascent belligerent nationalism, political hegemony, excessive protectionism and racism coming to the forefront once again.

It is with regret that I note that many of the fears that I had then are coming all too true today. The emergence of age-old rivalries based purely on ethnic differences and religious intolerance in the Republics of the former Yugoslavia have shocked and horrified the international community. The atrocities being committed against the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the name of "ethnic cleansing" defy description. The oppression of ethnic minorities, indiscriminate killings and illegal arrests of innocent civilians must cease immediately. The international community should commit itself fully to the task of restoring peace in that region so that its peoples may resume their lives in peace and harmony.

The world has seen remarkable progress in the realm of disarmament in recent years. Most noteworthy in this respect has been the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce their nuclear arsenals by nearly 70 per cent. While we welcome that agreement, we should not be satisfied until the danger of nuclear proliferation is totally eliminated and the existing stockpiles are drastically reduced.

The international community may consider putting its foot down harder in regions where the possibility of nuclear proliferation and the use of nuclear arms exists. Such pressure should be extended sooner rather than later, as proven in the experiences of the recent Gulf crisis. But that approach should be considered an integral part of the process of global disarmament.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

We have always supported the concept of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace. However, such zones cannot be realized without the desire and commitment of the States of the respective regions. We feel that the convening of international conferences or broad-based meetings on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace should be preceded by consultations and a degree of agreement amongst the States concerned.

Maldives considers that proposals for zones of peace and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be re-addressed or revived in the context of the current and newly emerging international situation. With regard to the proposals relevant to our own region, Maldives continues to support the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. However, it may now be time to reinvigorate the process through the application of new and fresh ideas. We believe that the current international climate may make nations receptive to many of the ideas that were formerly not acceptable when the world was held captive to bloc politics.

Maldives has always supported the prohibition and elimination of all forms of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological ones. We are happy to note that during the current session, a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons is to be adopted. We fully support this convention and intend to become one of its first signatories.

While we are heartened at the progress being made in the field of disarmament, we have yet to see a very tangible return in the form of a peace dividend. The continuing economic deprivation in the developing countries poses a greater threat in many ways to the security of mankind than did the cold war. It is imperative that the developed countries direct their

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

attention and resources to the assistance of the developing countries in their efforts to become more self-reliant.

The continuing and widening disparity between the developed and developing countries remains a matter of concern. It is futile to believe that the world may enjoy peace and progress while two thirds of humanity lives in utter deprivation. We call on the developed countries to liberalize their trade practices and expeditiously to conclude the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The inequities inherent in the international economic system must be remedied and the developing countries given a fair and just opportunity to improve the socio-economic well-being of their peoples.

This is the first opportunity the entire international community has had to comment jointly on the legacy of Rio. It is to be hoped that we all emerged from Rio imbued with a sense of commitment and the determination to implement the policies emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. More than any other, my country is aware of the severe consequences inherent in ignoring the continuing degradation of the environment.

Maldives is proud to have been one of the initial signatories of both the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions and we shall very shortly ratify them. We urge all others to do the same in order that the provisions of the Conventions may be implemented.

One of the very important documents of the Rio Summit was Agenda 21. This session of the General Assembly has been charged with the task of organizing and implementing certain decisions included in that Agenda. One of those is the establishment of a commission on sustainable development, which Maldives fully supports.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

As a small island State with minimal resources that are inadequate to confront the monumental environmental challenges we face, Maldives eagerly anticipates the convening of the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States in 1993. We hope that all countries will participate in that conference to the fullest extent possible.

I should also like to recall at this juncture that during this session we are marking the second anniversary of another summit of equal importance - the World Summit for Children. The Declaration endorsed by that Summit has now been signed by some 140 Heads of State or Government, and over 130 countries have prepared or are in the process of developing national programmes of action to achieve the goals set out in the Declaration. It is now time for the implementation of these programmes. Maldives has been working closely with the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to execute the national programmes of action adopted in the region. We have just completed a ministerial conference on children, held in Colombo, where the Colombo Resolution on Children was adopted. It is our hope that the objectives set forth at the Summit for Children will also continue to be given the highest priority by all countries and that its noble aims will never be neglected.

Experience has proven that peace can never be achieved through force or a balance of military strength. We have laid to waste so much of our precious and irreplaceable resources. It is time we forged a new path for peace based on partnership and cooperation. That is what the United Nations has always striven for. We, for our part, renew our pledge of full support and commitment to the noble objectives and principles enshrined in the Charter.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

As I stated at the beginning, this is a time of challenge and opportunity. Let us not walk away from these challenges. Let us face them with resolve and dedication. Our goals can be achieved only through political will. The world deserves no less.

Mr. BOOH-BOOH (Cameroon) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, the contribution that your country, Bulgaria, is making to the building of a new world order accords with the genius of its people. We are gratified by your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, and we wish you every success in the discharge of your mandate.

We take pleasure in hailing and paying tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, who skilfully handled his responsibilities at the forty-sixth session, which was marked by, among other major events, the election of the new Secretary-General of our Organization.

We also take pleasure in addressing heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali. The energy and distinction with which he has assumed his new functions reinforce our conviction that he will succeed in lending the necessary impetus to the indispensable transformation that will enable the United Nations system to rise to the growing expectations of a world seeking peace, security and prosperity for all.

His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru admirably strove towards the same ends during his remarkable term at the helm of our Organization. Cameroon offers him its profound thanks.

Thirteen new States have just been admitted to the United Nations. This is a resounding victory of the inalienable right of peoples to decide for themselves, and we see it as a sign of the times: the beginning of a new page in the history of humankind.

We therefore take pleasure in welcoming among us the representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, San Marino, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

The forty-seventh session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when the international community is still trying to cope with the sweeping changes brought about by the end of the cold war. None the less, there is increasingly gaining ground a convergence of wills in confronting the new kinds of challenges that threaten our collective security, and in meeting old challenges such as poverty and want, whose continued existence in this new day and age seems like a negation of our shared humanity.

The historic Security Council summit of 31 January 1992, the very first of its kind, provided a striking illustration of that point, reviving the hope that the collective responsibility of our Organization in the quest for solutions to global challenges will henceforth be based on more effective international solidarity.

Cameroon thus agrees with the rest of the international community as to the need to revitalize the United Nations so as to increase its efficacy, its prestige and its authority to enable it to discharge the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter.

The shared vision of the Member States as to the central role the Organization must henceforth play in the realm of international peace and security, as also in the equally vital area of development, implies the prerequisite that decisions be taken on the basis of consensus. That being so, the restructuring process now under way must neither tend towards side-lining certain States nor lead to redeployments based on selective priorities.

In that context it is appropriate to welcome the pertinent study "Agenda for peace" submitted by the Secretary-General at the request of the Security Council. The bold proposals it embodies will, we are convinced, stimulate

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

joint reflection on all the issues connected with peace, which are priority concerns of the international community. We share in the global vision that emerges from that study. The fact is that the problems of peace cannot be analysed solely in terms of the prevention and management of conflicts, because peace and security are contingent upon factors that are at once socio-economic, political and military in nature.

Therefore we welcome the latest spectacular strides taken in the arena of disarmament, as consolidated by the recent conclusion of work on the Convention on Chemical Weapons. But progress remains to be made in checking the risk of the proliferation of nuclear technology and coping with supply and demand in conventional weaponry.

In fact, though it is certain that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction does contribute to strengthening international peace and security, the definition of a minimum threshhold of weaponry necessary to ensure the security of States reassures the international community as to the desired achievement of general and complete disarmament.

We might thus be able to build a lasting peace and release major resources for the building of a new world order that will be more equitable, marked by greater solidarity and oriented towards the advamcement and fulfilment of all human beings.

That is the rationale that fits the initiative taken by the member States of the Economic Community of Central Africa aimed at the implementation of measures likely to build confidence and enhance security and development in our subregion.

Thus, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 46/37 B, adopted by consensus at the forty-sixth session, the Secretary-General has proclaimed the establishment of a standing advisory committee responsible for matters of

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

security in Central Africa. Indeed, the 11 States of our subregion, having met at Yaounde from 27 to 31 July 1992 under the auspices of the United Nations, adopted that Committee's action programme, which revolves around a set of measures notably involving establishing a centre for training peace-keepers; entering into a non-aggression pact; and establishing an international headquarters and staff for crisis management.

In this regard I wish on behalf of its promoters to express our appreciation to the Organization for the assistances that has been provided thus far in the implementation of confidence-building measures in Central Africa.

We sincerely hope that the United Nations and individual Member States, and governmental and non-governmental organizations alike, will provide assistance to the Committee's action programme.

The elimination of poverty and underdevelopment must have priority among the present concerns of the international community. To that end, we have decided upon strategies and action programmes to be implemented. The same is true of the Declaration that emanated from the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, on international economic co-operation. The strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade is a part of this trend, as indeed are the conclusions reached at the recent United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development.

Furthermore, I would observe that our countries have taken a certain number of steps in economic and political terms. Economically, they have undertaken painful reform in the context of structural adjustment, and, politically, they have set in place a process of democratization to ensure their people of advancement and more effective enjoyment of human rights.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

To meet with success, however, the efforts thus undertaken by developing countries must be accompanied by respect on the part of the developed countries for commitments undertaken so as to seal the new contract of worldwide solidarity in favour of development, a contract that expresses the convergent vision of the international community as to strategies and plans of action to be implemented.

Against that background, the present international economic environment must, especially with regard to raw materials, stop being a jungle in which the ruthless law of speculation holds sway and contempt is shown for the legitimate demands of our countries for more equitable compensation for our commodities.

Beyond that, it is high time to find a satisfactory solution to the debt problems, the weight of which is paralysing our economies, in terms of debt-servicing leading to unsustainable investments of net financial flows towards the rich countries and multinational institutions.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

In this respect, I should like, in particular, to welcome the Rio resolution with regard to financial resources - a resolution that extends the benefit of debt cancellation to medium-income countries. We hope that this major decision will be translated into action.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the extreme seriousness of the situation in Africa, where there is an unprecedented economic crisis, aggravated by natural disasters, civil wars and the social consequences of structural adjustment, which threaten the process of democratization. While this situation devolves, first and foremost, on the African countries themselves, the international community cannot be indifferent to it.

The United Nations was therefore fully justified in deciding to give special attention to this situation. All of us have a duty to see to it that the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s does not suffer the same sad fate as the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Thus the plan must be launched urgently and the necessary resources must be provided for the plans of action envisaged by the institutions and bodies concerned with its implementation.

We hope that the conference on the development of Africa, to take place in Japan in 1993, will provide an opportunity to mobilize additional resources to relaunch growth and start economic recovery in our continent. The Secretary-General's initiative with regard to the convening of an international conference on finance for development is based on these very concerns and deserves the international community's support.

The resources available in the world are commensurate with the great challenges of our time. In fact, the international context has never been so favourable for the beginning of a genuine North-South dialogue taking into

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

account the interests of all. In this regard, a global summit on social development would provide an opportunity to embark on an in-depth analysis of human development in all its aspects, in the context of the forthcoming international meetings on human rights, women, and population. Indeed, we must agree to attach to the economic, social and cultural rights of the individual the importance that is now attached - unfortunately, too often selectively - to civil and political rights. Thus we could conquer poverty and create the conditions for sustainable development, taking into account simultaneously the needs of growth and the imperatives of protection of the environment, in the interest of mankind. The establishment during the present session of a committee for sustainable development would be an important step towards achieving this goal.

Progress and economic and social development are possible only in a climate of global peace and security. Unfortunately there are still numerous conflicts and hotbeds of tension, which seriously imperil peace. Therefore, we are particularly alarmed at the deplorable violent ethnic conflicts that are tearing apart the peoples in the former Yugoslavia. Cameroon appeals to the sense of reason of the parties to the conflict to halt this war, which is the result of an obsolete and deplorable ideology. We shall continue to support all steps taken by the Security Council, the European Community and other bodies to achieve a satisfactory solution.

With regard to the Middle East, the peace process that was launched in Madrid and is still under way must be maintained with a view to keeping alive the possibility of achieving a peace capable of standing the test of time and of men and, once and for all, reconciling the peoples of that region.

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

With respect to South Africa, a harmonious transition to a democratic, non-racial and united country free of violence is in the interests of all. The prospects that emerged from the recent Mandela-de Klerk summit are positive, and we firmly support them.

While welcoming the maintenance of the cease-fire in Cambodia, we call on all the parties involved to cooperate fully with the United Nations Transitional Authority so that it may be enabled to carry out its mission within the framework of the Paris Agreements. Cameroon is proud to have been able to able to contribute to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) by sending to that friendly country a contingent of civil forces and a group to supervise the cease-fire. We take this opportunity to reiterate our willingness to serve the cause of peace.

We also welcome the culmination of the peace process in Angola, where elections have just been held under the aegis of the United Nations. In that fraternal country, there is opening up an opportunity to achieve internal reconciliation and to embark on the work of national reconstruction, which will inject new dynamism into the efforts to attain economic integration in our subregion.

We earnestly hope that there will be a similar course of events in Somalia, Liberia, Mozambique, Western Sahara and all other regions of the world that are still torn by conflicts.

Unfortunately, international peace and security, the environment and development are not the only major challenges of the day. The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, drugs, terrorism and other scourges call for ever greater mobilization, and we shall continue to support measures decreed by the international community to counteract them. Action taken in

(Mr. Booh-Booh, Cameroon)

this area must be pursued and strengthened. That is why we repeat our support for initiatives to convene a global summit on social development, the world conference on women, the conference on African children, the conference on population and development, and the conference on human rights.

Finally, with regard to natural disasters and man-made emergencies, we approve the steps the Organization has taken towards restructuring, rationalization and coordination - steps that have led to the establishment of the Office of the United Nations Coordinator for Disaster Relief.

As was emphasized last year, Cameroon has opted for democracy and has resolutely begun profound changes designed to establish a more democratic society with ever greater respect for the fundamental human rights and freedoms of its citizens. Following legislative elections, in which transparency and proper conduct were noted by numerous independent observers of various nationalities, Cameroon acquired a multiparty Parliament, in which democracy is given free expression.

The pluralist, democratic and adversarial nature of the new society in Cameroon has led to the establishment of a coalition Government responsible to Parliament. In a few days' time - on 11 October - this process will culminate in the holding of presidential elections involving at least eight candidates. We owe all this progress to President Paul Biya - a man of renewal whose attachment to openness and whose commitment to democracy in Cameroon have never been denied.

Cameroon wants to play its part in meeting the needs inherent in the embryonic new world order. Clearly this is a long-term objective, which must be pursued at a pace appropriate to our society and which, if it is to be successful, requires the assistance and cooperation of all people of good will. I know that we can count on that.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

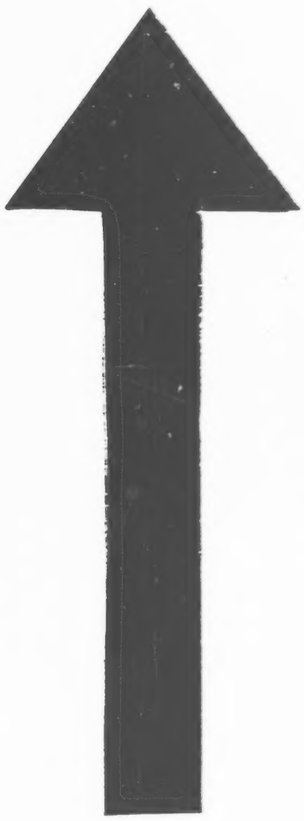
May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. ASSADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): This afternoon the Assembly heard the statement by the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates. My delegation would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the following points in connection with that statement.

As for references in the United Arab Emirates statement to my country, let me reiterate very briefly our overall approach to and policy towards the Persian Gulf region and our neighbours in this area, which are based on the maintenance and promotion of friendly and good-neighbourly relations. We believe that only such an approach can guarantee stability in the area. My Minister expounded on this matter last week in his statement to the Assembly, and in fact he presented a detailed plan of action to the Assembly last year.

Having said that, let me add that from the very beginning, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran tried in earnest to resolve the misunderstandings regarding the situation of non-United Arab Emirates residents of the Abu Mousa island.

To that end, and cognizant of the imperative need of the region for tranquillity more than ever before, and also that understanding and good-neighbourliness should govern relations among the countries in the Persian Gulf area, we entered into negotiations with the other party. We hoped that the other party would reciprocate such an approach and attitude; yet the United Arab Emirates party raised certain issues in the negotiations



(Mr. Assadi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

which were totally irrelevant to the issue at hand, thus forcing the bilateral talks to a halt at that stage. Such an attitude does not lend itself to problem resolution.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the other party's approach to the issue, including the issuance of a hasty statement on the state of negotiations, runs contrary to the interests of the two countries and the region at large. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while reiterating its principled approach to the situation in the Abu Mousa island and its commitment to the existing agreements and understandings, including those arrived at in 1971, once again reaffirms its readiness to continue bilateral talks for the resolution of recent misunderstandings, on the basis of respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good-neighbourliness and the imperative of the maintenance of security and tranquillity in the area.

We have had a history of cordial relations with the United Arab Emirates, and we are confident that wisdom and prudence will ultimately prevail, thus denying further opportunity to extraneous elements that have, in their statements and official pronouncements, played holier-than-thou, all the while trying to fan the flames for interests that are not those of the United Arab Emirates, Iran or the Persian Gulf region.

Mr. AL-SUWAIDI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): In exercise of the right of reply, I have taken the floor to reply to the statement made by the representative of Iran.

Regarding sovereignty over the islands of Abu Mousa and Tunb, I should like to state here, once again, that that sovereignty is that of the United Arab Emirates. On behalf of my delegation, I should like to stress that,

(Mr. Al-Suwaidi,
United Arab Emirates)

since 1971, the United Arab Emirates has consistently refused to acquiesce in the Iranian military occupation of the islands of Abu Mousa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb. We continue to reject that occupation, which we consider as an illegal act that contravenes the United Nations Charter, and the principles of international law.

My country has once again reiterated that rejection by reaffirming, within the Security Council and at other levels within the United Nations, its sovereignty over those islands. In my country's view, Iran's presence there is no more than an act of occupation.

My country had hoped the Islamic Republic of Iran would return those Arab islands to the United Arab Emirates as compensation for injustices inflicted in the days of the Shah. In light of all of that, and mindful of the historic ties between our two countries, my country has striven to settle this dispute by peaceful means, especially in the context of bilateral talks. It is regrettable indeed that the Government of Iran has not responded to our endeavours, but, to the contrary, has tended recently to escalate the dispute by resorting to certain measures and practices that are quite illegal and are aimed against the nationals of the Emirate on the island of Abu Mousa, including the use of armed force.

Nevertheless, my country wishes, once again, to reiterate its desire to resolve this dispute by any of the peaceful means prescribed by the Charter in order for it to regain its sovereignty over the three islands, which are part and parcel of our territory. My country is convinced that stability in the Gulf region requires cooperation between the States of the region, together with respect, on the part of every State for the sovereignty of the others,

(Mr. Al-Suwaidi,
United Arab Emirates)

and also requires the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. We call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond favourably to our stated position.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply. The intervention is limited to five minutes.

Mr. ASSADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I did not think I would again, as I supposed our position had been made clear here in the Assembly in the earlier statement made by our Minister and also in my very brief intervention a few minutes ago. The situation is quite clear; our position is very clear. It is unfortunate that the delegation of the United Arab Emirates uses provocative and inflammatory language for a problem, namely the situation in the island of Abu Musa, that, as we have stated on several occasions, can be resolved very easily on the basis of the undertaking that we accepted in 1971.

The idea of territorial claims, especially in the Persian Gulf, is very strange. Everybody knows that in our region if countries were to raise such old claims the whole area would again be in flames. There is no point in making such territorial claims. What has just been received in a news report this afternoon is that there has been an armed clash between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in which an Egyptian and a national of Qatar have been killed. That is the situation in the area. Who wants to open this Pandora's box?

What we need in the area is peace, tranquillity, stability, good-neighbourly relations, understanding and fraternal sincerity and honesty. We call on our brothers in the United Arab Emirates to heed wisdom and prudence. We call on them very sincerely. Let us not allow, as I said a few minutes ago, some extraneous elements to fan the flames. I am sure this delegation is as confident as the other delegation at the other end of the Hall that fanning the flames by others does not serve our interests.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES (A/47/409/Add.2)

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/47/409/Add.2, which contains a letter dated 25 September 1992 addressed to the President of the Assembly by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences. As Members are aware, the Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its resolution 40/243, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in the letter I have just mentioned, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to hold a special meeting at Headquarters from 16 to 18 December 1992 during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts the recommendation of the Committee on Conferences?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.